



# On the Gulch

A Newsletter For and About City of Helena Employees

**You work for the city? Why doesn't the city do...?**



Montanatom1950 (Flickr)

## **INTRANET?** **What's That?**

No, that's not a misspelling of Internet.

City employees can find all kinds of great resources on our Intranet site: <https://intranet.helenamt.gov/hr.html>

We have access to online safety training and the training calendar, important forms and benefit information, city policies, and more.

So go ahead - explore the site, you'll be surprised what you can find there!

You work for the city, so you probably hear complaints about city services from your neighbors and friends. Here are some tips for responding:

Q: What's with snow & ice on the roads?

A: Our streets division has a plan in place and are as prepared as they can be when snow and cold weather are predicted. Priority routes are major roadways and emergency snow routes. When there is moisture and it freezes, there is very little to do other than sand the roads. If each road was sanded from intersection to intersection trucks would have to make multiple trips back to the **streets shop** near Walmart to refill, they can only hold so much sand. To avoid delays caused by back-tracking, trucks sand intersections and steep hills first. To learn more, visit the

Streets Department website: <http://www.helenamt.gov/public-works/streets/winter.html>. **To report a special problem, call 447-1566.**

Q: I tried to call the \_\_\_ department and couldn't reach anyone! What do you people do all day?

A: Each department is staffed shallowly, which means that if there is one person in the office to answer the phone and he or she leaves briefly to visit the bathroom or get a cup of coffee, no one is there to answer your call.

If you leave a message, someone will get back to you as soon as possible. Don't forget to leave your name, phone number, and a specific question so the person can be prepared with an answer or to forward the message to the appropriate office.

## **Difficult Customer? Watch for Body Language - Customer Service Tip #2**

When a member of the public walks into your office ready for an argument, how do you respond?

First, stand up. By standing, you acknowledge that the issue is serious and at the same time you are indicating you will not be intimidated. Do not approach, that could be considered an aggressive move.

An immediate second step is to decide whether this person poses a physical threat to you or your colleagues. If you feel threatened, call 911. Do not hesitate.

Third, offer compassion. People often appear to be angry about one thing, but really it's something completely unrelated. This issue is easier for them to blame on

someone. No matter how irrational, this person's feelings are valid. Be compassionate and try to understand the person's perspective.

Fourth, find a way to answer the question or concern positively by asking them for a reasonable solution. Just listening is often the best response.

How to Respond to Disruptive People  
training is offered by  
Judge Michael Swingley.  
Contact Morgan Maynard-Dixon for  
information.  
[mmaynard-dixon@helenamt.gov](mailto:mmaynard-dixon@helenamt.gov) or  
447-8333

**The Civic Center is hosting three different Nutcracker performances in December!**

**Visit the website (<http://www.helenaciviccenter.com/home.html>) for more information and descriptions of each dance company's unique vision for this holiday favorite!**

## Employee News

Congratulations to:

Fred Pippin, Fire -  
promoted to Captain;  
Neil Koehler, Fire -  
promoted to Lieutenant;  
Kelly Tuck, Fire -  
promoted to  
Assistant Fire Chief;  
Ken Wood, Fire -  
promoted to  
Assistant Fire Chief.

Welcome to:

Katherine Grover  
(Dec. 9th),  
911 dispatcher; and  
Steven Renshaw  
(Dec. 30th),  
police officer.



## And the Award Goes To... Scott Longenecker!

Congratulations to Scott Longenecker, our golf pro at Bill Roberts Golf Course, who was named Merchandiser of the Year (Public) by the Western Montana Chapter of the PGA!

Scott was selected for his personal commitment to merchandising and building relationships with his customers. The nomination is submitted to the Pacific Northwest Section of the PGA, and section winners from that region then go on to be nominated for a national award. The award will be presented to Scott in the Spring and will be on display in his office following the presentation.

Helena is lucky to have this five-time award winner at Bill Roberts Golf Course.

In 2006 Scott was awarded the Merchandiser of the Year. And in 2007 and again in 2008, he was presented with the Junior Golf Leader award for his "outstanding contribution in the promotion and development of golf juniors."

In 2009 he was awarded the overall Teacher of the Year for the region, for "promoting the game of golf through expertise in teaching."

Congratulations, Scott, and thank you for your commitment to our community and your service to Bill Roberts Golf Course.



## Tech Tip #9: ALL City Email is Public Record! \*Ellen Bell

Tis the season to clean out your unneeded e-mail archives... If what you type in email isn't something you would want on the front page of the IR, don't send it!

IT&S has been charged with implementing a new file backup of *all e-mail going in or coming out of our mail servers.*

The first thing that caught my attention was "all e-mail..." When that begins,

all e-mail that is **sent to me** and all e-mail **that I send to someone** else will be archived (saved) – perhaps for 3 years, perhaps for 7 years, perhaps longer.

Do I want some of the e-mail that goes through my GroupWise to be archived as a public record? Now is a good time to start training others about the kind of e-mail you want to see in your inbox. Make sure you're getting and sending the kind of e-mail that reflects well on you.



## Parking in Helena

The Parking Commission receives regular complaints about vehicles parked in restricted areas, resident only, loading zones, permit only, etc. In response, a vehicle was purchased to enable Parking Control Officers to patrol areas outside the normally foot-patrolled downtown areas.

To improve security and safety and to address budget shortfalls, maintenance costs, and system inefficiencies in two city parking lots, the Helena Parking Commission will install automated parking control systems. Look for signs and keep your eyes open for announcements about these changes!

**Keep your sidewalk clear of snow and ice!**